



*FIFTY-EIGHTH*  
*ANNUAL REPORT*  
*OF THE*  
*MINISTRY-AT-*  
*LARGE*

*IN LOWELL, MASS.*



*For the Year from May, 1902,  
to April, 1903, Inclusive.*



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LOWELL, MASS.  
COURIER-CITIZEN COMPANY, PRINTERS,  
1903.

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1902/03

TO THE CITIZENS OF LOWELL :—

This Ministry-at-Large is nearing its sixtieth year of life. Its services of physical relief, of education and of religion are rendered to small wage earners of this manufacturing city of one hundred thousand population—one-fourth of which are small wage earners. It is one of the agencies which have made Lowell attractive as a city of residence for small wage earners, and which insures to manufacturers the great advantage of an unfailing supply of workers. The honest workman of Lowell, in times of sickness, loss of income or bereavement, may find here a friend and supporter till his self-reliance is recovered.

We spend yearly, in giving material relief to needy families, \$2,200—which is derived from the interest on the Thomas Nesmith Fund, the Jonathan Tyler Fund, the J. C. Dalton Fund and the Harriet Nesmith Maternity Fund. Besides this, in the year, counsel is given to hundreds of applicants in their domestic, legal and financial affairs. The number of applicants for advice of this kind, together with letters of information written to other charitable institutions, agents and churches, has been 315. In 422 instances we gave aid to heads of needy families, and in some instances to needy individuals, although as a rule we confine our aid to families. To this part of our work the Minister-at-Large must give unfeigned interest and sympathy; but he must give to it also a sober, steady-going common sense. I have served during the year the State Board of Charity as Lowell inspector or visitor of the intemperates released from the State Farm at Bridgewater on indeterminate sentences.

But this kind of relief giving, necessary and beneficial if properly administered, is but preparatory to something yet more necessary and beneficial — moral elevation of the family through knowledge of the laws of human life and right living. And in saying this, I have in mind that sober, steady-going common sense to which I just now referred, and also the observed facts and experiences of the past seventeen years here in Lowell as the Minister-at-Large. The absence from municipal relief of this larger meaning and purpose makes much of what is called municipal charity to be not beneficial, but creative of imposture, drunkenness and pauperism. And some of our larger cities have become aroused against this abortion of their charitable intention, and are putting a stop to it.

The man or woman, boy or girl who works in a factory all the day of ten hours, perhaps with their food and home living not as they should be, and their dress not of the proud feeling kind — and dress makes caste divisions among poor people, even to the extent of creating distemper within a well organized sanctuary choir in a known instance — such a man or woman, boy or girl, is likely to be too tired physically to apply themselves to study in the evening. They are equally in need of recreation, when their family and household duties allow time for it. And we have found that classes which have recreative interest mixed with instruction are best attended by them — classes in cookery, home adornment, dressmaking, dancing, singing, story telling, fencing, light gymnastics, games, amusements. But the instructor of such class must be competent and attractive if it is to hold together for even a brief season. And it is surprising to find how much of helpfulness is given to the pupils, by means of suggestion, in such classes by an efficient instructor.

We have been fortunate during the year in having the services of such an efficient teacher as Miss Grace Batchelder,

of Boston, who, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Public Schools of Lowell, conducted classes in cookery for grammar school girls. Three classes per day, of from fifteen to twenty girls, were held. Also, the services of Miss Josephine Ockington and her assistant, Miss Andrews, for the large dancing classes. Miss Ockington gave her services gratuitously. Miss Ruth A. Foss had charge of the class in millinery; Mrs. George C. Wright of the young women's class in home making; and Mrs. S. W. Killpartrick of the singing; Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Blowen had charge of gymnastics and games; Mr. Hutton, Mr. Holstein, Mr. Toy and Mrs. Murphy of socials and entertainments. I had charge of the young men's class in ethics and history; also the class for reading and story telling.

The Boston and Northern Street Railway Company contributed 500 tickets for electric car rides, and we distributed these tickets to mothers and their children. The children of the Sunday school were entertained at Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, with fitting services and presents.

In the way of moral instruction and religious worship we have well attended church services and a thriving Sunday school. Our first concern is to strengthen, to enlighten and to enrich the family life in wholesome living and moral purposes. Our church is an attractive, homelike place. The fathers and mothers and their children like to come into it, and they do come regularly. The discipline is firm but not obtrusive, the atmosphere of the place is always clean and free and inviting. The music is good, the plants, pictures and flowers abundant, the singing is spirited and spontaneous of the fine old spiritual hymns which have stood the approval of ages, and are as inspiring to-day as ever, because the spiritual life of the ages pours richly through them and through the souls and lips of to-day's worshippers. The service and sermon are simple and distinctly



religious. The aim of both is to get the worshipper away from things and self to principles and God ; to make the worshippers understand that the world is not a factory where men are making things, but a school where God is making men ; that the causes of the great evils which afflict mankind are not outward and material, but inward and spiritual ; that the cruelties of human conditions are caused by man's ignorance of the laws of right living and the absence of moral motives ; that with the confident faith that comes of self-control they can easily carry their weight of cares

“ Up the great world's altar stairs  
That slope through darkness up to God ;  
And make those stairs, to Sin and Famine known,  
Sing with the welcome of their feet.”

During the year I have served, also, as the Secretary of the North Middlesex Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, as the Secretary of the Liberal Christian Club (of Universalist and Unitarian men), and as the Secretary and Treasurer of Merrimack Valley Unitarian League. Our Free Church also took part in the union services which were held during the winter and spring by the four Liberal Christian Churches of the city.

GEORGE C. WRIGHT.

LOWELL, April 30, 1903.



## FORM OF BEQUEST.

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I give, devise and bequeath unto the MINISTRY-AT-LARGE  
in Lowell, Massachusetts, the sum of.....Dollars.

NOTE.—The list of Contributors to the Ministry-at-Large will be sent only to Contributors. It has been found that such lists published by charitable institutions may be the means of annoyance to those contributing.



